

CITY OF NEWBURGH ARTS & CULTURE FORUM 2

Held on Wednesday, November 10, 2004

MEETING REPORT SUMMARY

Introduction

In August 2004 Jean-Ann McGrane, the City Manager of the City of Newburgh, announced plans to host a brainstorming session to focus on the role that arts and culture can play in redeveloping Newburgh and uniting its citizens. This first "Arts and Culture Forum" was held on Monday, September 20, 2004 at the Newburgh Free Library and was attended by 82 people. Printed copies of reports from this meeting, as well as reading materials on arts and culture initiatives that have taken place across the country, are available for review at the Newburgh Free Library Local History Room and on the City's website at <http://cityofnewburgh-ny.gov>, under Public Notices.

A Second Forum, held on November 10th, and attended by 46 people, launched the process to establish an Arts Advisory Board, or Arts Commission, for the City of Newburgh. An Ad Hoc Arts Advisory Working Group of sixteen members of the Newburgh community are now working with the City to develop the ordinance for the proposed Arts Advisory Board.

A Third Forum, to be held on December 6, 2004, will identify facilities and sites in Newburgh that may be available for arts and cultural use, and to suggest possible uses for these venues.

The Newburgh Arts and Culture Initiative is being developed by the City of Newburgh in partnership with the Orange County Citizens Foundation, Orange County Tourism / Orange Arts and Arts In Orange / Arts Community Grants and the Newburgh Free Library.

Meeting Report

The meeting was called to order by Councilwomen Elsa Figueroa-App and Regina Angelo, who repeated the thanks to participants expressed by Mayor Nicholas Valentine in the first Arts & Culture Forum. Said Ms. Angelo:

We are hopeful that this evening's forum will lead to an Arts Advisory Board, or Commission, to assist the Mayor and City Council with the development of arts and culture in our city. Newburgh is blessed with a wealth of cultural possibilities—possibilities that include the development of historic buildings, and an arts environment that inspires its residents and channels the energy of youth into productive paths. We look forward to hearing the results of your discussion

tonight, and to working with you in the upcoming months to develop an Arts Advisory Board that will advise the City on matters related to arts and culture and promote the arts as an integral part of the City's life.

Jean-Ann McGrane also welcomed participants and indicated that this evening's forum was a direct result of the meeting held on September 20th. Said Ms. McGrane:

You will remember that one of the top priorities expressed by the group was the creation of an Arts Advisory Board, or Commission, composed of a broad cross-section of the community, to represent the interest of the arts in Newburgh. The group saw this Commission serving as a primary contact point for artists and organizations in Newburgh, assisting the City in promoting and marketing the arts, and building community awareness and engagement.

The goals of tonight's meeting are:

- *To develop guidelines for the creation of an Arts Advisory Board or Commission for Newburgh, including:*
 - *Mission and Purpose of Advisory Board*
 - *Duties and Responsibilities of Advisory Board*
 - *Advisory Board Membership Criteria*
 - *Committees of the Board*
- *To nominate a group of individuals representing the broad spectrum of arts and culture activities in Newburgh to form an "Ad Hoc Working Group" that will work with the City of Newburgh to develop an Arts Advisory Board.*

As part of her introductory remarks, Ms. McGrane indicated that when we look at the arts commissions of other cities, we find that:

- *Arts commissions are established for the purpose of promoting the arts as an integral part of community life, to nurture and preserve cultural diversity, and to enhance and enrich the quality of life for its citizens;*
- *Arts commissions are established to act in an advisory capacity to the City and its citizens, to represent the interests of the arts to the City and to represent the City's interests in art-related matters.*
- *Arts commissions are varied in the terms of their composition and length of their appointments—ranging from 7 to 15 in number, with appointments that run from two to four years. We found that at least one arts commission has a permanent position for a young adult.*

While almost every county in New York State has an Arts Council and some of its larger cities—like New York City, Buffalo and Rochester—have arts commissions or arts councils, most local municipalities in New York State do not have arts commissions. Newburgh is poised to take a leading role with regard to the rest of the state when it establishes its own Arts Advisory Board!

Breakout Sessions

In the breakout sessions that comprised the main part of the meeting, participants spent well over an hour discussing questions related to their vision for Newburgh's future Arts Advisory Board. Participants were provided with documents that outlined the mission and duties of a number of Arts Commissions from across the country (see attached document).

The questions discussed by the two breakout groups were:

- What is the mission / purpose of the Newburgh Arts Advisory Board?
- What are the duties and responsibilities of the Newburgh Arts Advisory Board?
- What is the membership criteria for the Arts Advisory Board? How will it ensure broad representation from the Newburgh community?
- What special committees, if any, should be created as part of the Arts Advisory Board to address specific needs within the Newburgh community?

The breakout groups were asked to assemble and prioritize mission statements, roles and responsibilities and membership criteria, and to report back to the assembled group at the end of the evening.

Discussion Summary – Breakout Group 1

Group 1 identified the following mission /goal statements for the Newburgh Arts Advisory Board / Commission:

Mission

1. To exercise authority over matters related to art;
2. To promote the arts, through education programs, sponsorship and other methods;
3. To encourage the viability and sustainability of the arts;
4. To create a nurturing environment for the arts, including physical spaces to create art, to present art, and to educate audiences;
5. To promote opportunities for, and equalize access to, the arts.
6. To make the arts “user friendly” for artists and the consumers of art programs;
7. To stimulate a lively cultural environment that takes advantage of the full potential offered by artists over the diverse spectrum of the community environment.

Goals

- To equalize access to the arts
- To stimulate diversity in the arts and cultural environment
- To promote the inclusion of aesthetic considerations in decision-making

Duties/Responsibilities

1. To advise government;
2. To establish liaisons between organizations;
3. To provide a resource for citizens and artists;
4. To advocate for and promote the arts;
5. To foster the development of programs and activities, including the existing riverfront festival and the future Henry Hudson 2009 Festival;
6. To encourage funding for the arts;
7. To facilitate and expedite a public art works programs and funds;
8. To undertake planning;
9. To contribute to the city's economic vitality.

Membership Criteria for the Arts Advisory Board

1. Residency in Newburgh and/or the greater Newburgh area
2. Ethnic diversity
3. A proven commitment to the arts
4. A willingness and ability to serve as a volunteer and to represent the different disciplines (performance, visual arts, written word, etc.)

Discussion Summary – Breakout Group 2

Group 2 proposed the following mission statement for the Newburgh Arts Advisory Board / Commission:

Mission

- To stimulate and enhance the quality of life of the City of Newburgh by creating an environment that reflects the diverse character of the community;
- To advise the governing body;
- To promote and develop the arts as an integral part of Newburgh and the region.

In addition: To encourage Newburgh's development as a "port of culture."

Functions/Roles of the Arts Advisory Board (in order of priority)

1. To advise government;
2. To advocate for and promote the arts;
3. To establish liaisons between organizations;
4. To encourage funding for the arts, including a "percentage for arts" program;
5. To oversee public art works programs and funds;
6. To foster the development of programs and activities, including the existing riverfront festival and the future Henry Hudson 2009 Festival;
7. To provide a resource for citizens;
8. To undertake planning;
9. To contribute to the city's economic vitality.

Membership Criteria

Number of Members

11 members

(Participants mentioned that there are 9 geographic “wards” in Newburgh for which representation on the Arts Advisory Board needs to be considered.)

Criteria for Membership

- City residence;
- Variety of disciplines and interests represented, including:
 - Representative(s) from the visual, performing and literary arts
 - Representative(s) from the education field
 - Representatives from arts-related businesses
 - Lay members from the Newburgh community
 - Youth representative(s)
- Three-year, staggered terms; no more than 2 consecutive terms; required attendance, with missing a prescribed number of meetings serving as grounds for removal.

Recommended Committees of the Board

- Youth
- Fundraising
- Facilities
- Public Art
- Events (including a calendar and events scheduling)
- Public relations / marketing

Selection of the “Ad Hoc Working Group: For the Arts Advisory Board

Following the reports of each breakout group, the assembled group was charged with selecting the individuals who would be invited to represent the diverse interests of Newburgh’s arts and culture community as part of an Ad Hoc Working Group. Initially, the meeting organizers had suggested that meeting participants nominate and select a working group of five individuals who would meet the following criteria:

- (1) Ability to attend monthly meetings;
- (2) Ability to make a 6-month commitment;
- (3) Represent an aspect of Newburgh’s arts and culture environment, including non-profit arts groups, art-related businesses, and groups that work with youth or in arts education, and represent a variety of media, in the performing and visual arts, and Newburgh’s history.

Meeting participants were told that the goal of the Ad Hoc Working Group was to work with the City to develop the language, including mission and duties, for an ordinance to be approved by the City Council establishing an Arts Advisory Board, or Arts Commission. Once the ordinance was approved, the official Arts Advisory Board would be constituted and the Working Group dissolved.

In total, sixteen individuals representing a diverse cross-section of Newburgh's community were nominated to serve on the Working Group. Because of the extraordinary enthusiasm, interest and experience of the nominees, meeting participants voted that each of these individuals be included in the Working Group.

The members of the Ad Hoc Arts Advisory Board Working Group are:

1. Garin Baker, Non-Resident, Fine Artist
2. Robin Cobbs, Resident, Fine Artist
3. Ramona Torres, Resident, Visual Artist
4. Susan Konvit, Non-Resident, Visual Artist, Fine Artist
5. Torrance Harvey, Resident, Performing Artist, Directs NFA Dance Team
6. Philip Rudolph, Non-Resident, Visual Artist
7. Keith Nieto, Resident, Visual & Performing Artist, Fine Artist
8. Calai Guglielmi, Resident, Fine Artist, Mother, Advocate
9. John Garrick, Resident, Performing Artist
10. Kippy Boyle, Resident, Fine Artist, Cultural Tourism
11. Kerry Mills, Resident, Visual Artist
12. Kali Z. Fasteau, Town of Newburgh, Performing Artist
13. John Plummer, Resident, Visual & Performing Artist
14. Omari Shakur, Resident, Performing Artist
15. Greg Kanan, New Windsor, Visual Artist, Makeup Artist
16. Paul Ellis, Non-Resident, Arts Administrator/Advocate

Additional individuals to be included in the Ad Hoc Working Group are an attorney who can help to draft appropriate ordinance language and a representative of the City Council, who can advise the group with regard to structural and procedural issues with regard to City Council Committees.

Next Steps

The Working Group will hold its first meeting in December in the week following the Third Arts and Culture Forum, scheduled for December 6th. Betsy McKean of the City of Newburgh and Sara Pasti will locate a meeting site, contact the above sixteen individuals, and meet with them to provide the group with meeting notes, research information, and other materials to assist them in their process.

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SPECIFIC COMMENTS FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS

Group 1 – Comments

Mission

The Arts Advisory Board should have the power to act on matters pertaining to the development and enrichment of the arts and humanities within the City of Newburgh.

It should seek:

- To promote:
 - Recommendations
 - Publicity
 - Outreach
 - Sponsorship
 - Invitations
 - Education
 - Encouragement
 - Recognition
- To ensure the viability and sustainability of the cultural industry
- To create a physical and human environment / landscape that nurtures artists, arts organizations and arts producers
- To provide a person—or agent—to assist artists.
- To provide equal access and/or opportunities, an equal playing field for all artists.
- To stimulate a diverse and lively arts in the City.

Group 2 – Comments

Possible Mission Statements to be included in the Arts Advisory Board Mission,
in order of priority:

1. To nurture artists, arts organizations and arts producers and nurture and preserve cultural diversity
2. To promote the arts as an integral part of community life
3. To reflect the entire city, including its cultural diversity
4. To develop and promote the cultural industry
5. To reflect the unique character of the city, including its population and its architecture
6. To act in an advisory capacity to the City Council
7. To promote the inclusion of aesthetic considerations in local decision-making
8. To enhance and enrich the quality of life
9. To create an artistic environment that is diverse
10. To serve the city and its citizens as advisors

Other things that an Arts Advisory Board should seek to accomplish:

- Serve not only the city, but the entire region
- Define / set the standard for arts leadership in the region
- Define, create and promote venues
- Create an artistic inventory of Newburgh
- Encourage multi-age art experiences and learning
- Promote diversity in all of its aspects—age, ethnicity and gender
- Develop, build and organize the arts
- Promote and nurture the arts
- Act as an advisory body

**CITY OF NEWBURGH
ARTS & CULTURE FORUM
EVALUATION RESPONSES
FROM MEETING ATTENDEES**

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES: 12

How would you rate this meeting as a useful first step in beginning a cultural planning process for Newburgh?

Excellent	4
Very Good	6
Adequate	2

If you did not think this meeting was useful, why not?

"One person dominated the conversation in our group."
"More people should have been invited."

What would encourage you to participate in future arts and culture planning meetings?

"Being informed."
"As long as there is progress and communication about developments, I will continue my involvement."
"Smaller groups."
"Invite young people from the community."
"Action!"
"More invites of those who are not solely artists."

What would you like to see future meetings accomplish?

"Continue to refine and define the purpose and objectives of this 'commission.'"
"More focused action plans."
"Committees formed with tasks and deadlines."
"Accomplish a solid calendar."
"Results!"